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Rao Bahadur C. V. S. Narasimha Raju :—" Will any days be allotted as non-official days in March, Sir ? "

* The hon. Sir Arthur Knapp :—" I can only say, Sir, that, as my hon. Friend is aware, the allotment is made by His Excellency. His Excellency has the matter under consideration. A point that arises is that it has not been usual in the past to allot any non-official days during the discussion of the Budget, but His Excellency is anxious on this occasion to make provision for non-official business, if possible. I have been in communication with the hon. the Leader of the Opposition on the question whether Members would like to have non-official business during the days that intervene between the actual introduction of the Budget and its discussion in the Council. For example they might like to use the balance of the day after the introduction of the Budget on the 2nd March for the purpose of discussing resolutions. For this purpose it is not necessary for His Excellency to make any allotment. In the ordinary course, after the Government work is finished, any portion that may be left may be devoted to other work. The question whether a further allotment for non-official business is to be made remains open, and I understand that if it is the general desire of the House to sit after the 20th March, His Excellency is quite prepared to take into consideration the allotment of non-official days in April. I propose to consult my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition further on this matter."

Rao Bahadur C. V. S. Narasimha Raju :—" If it is not inconvenient for the Government, two days, the 1st and 2nd April, may be fixed. That will be more convenient for the House, because it is not likely to meet for some months afterwards. We may not meet till August, and it is therefore desirable that two days should be allotted in April. "

* The hon. Sir Arthur Knapp :—" I shall convey the wishes of the House in this matter to His Excellency, Sir."

Mr. P. Anjaneyulu :—" I understand from what the hon. the Leader of the House said that any portion of the day that is allotted for Government business, after the Government business is over, may be allotted for non-official business."

* The hon Sir Arthur Knapp :—" No, Sir. It is not a question of allotment. It comes about automatically under the rules ; any part of a Government day which is not occupied by Government business is at the disposal of private Members."

III

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS.

* The hon. the President :—" I have to mention another matter to the House. It was usual, up to the time of the present reformed Councils, to register the attendance of hon. Members, and it is for many reasons desirable to renew it. One of these reasons is to assist hon. Members themselves in drawing up their travelling allowance bills. Moreover, Government as well as the Council Office would like to have definite information as to the Members present or absent on a particular day of a Council meeting. The question is how it is to be done, and I thought I had better put it before the House, so that I may know how hon. Members would like it to be done. My idea is to keep a book at the entrance and to request hon. Members to sign it once a day at any time they may please during their

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attendance in the House. This would be the most convenient plan for all concerned because if we kept a number of books in different places there might be confusion. We only want to know once a day the fact that any hon. Member attended the House. I might ask my own office to do it, but as hon. Members are at liberty to attend the House at any time of the day, it would mean a clerk being set apart for the whole day and he has to watch the coming in and going out of Members. This can be avoided if hon. Members would merely sign their names once during the course of the day."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—" What is the procedure adopted in other Provincial Councils, Sir ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" It varies ; I think in most places they sign in a book."

Rao Bahadur C. V. S. NARASIMHA RAJU :—" If I remember aright, I think about 1913 or 1914 one clerk of the Legislative Department used to stand at the entrance and take the names of the Members as they entered the Council. It went on well, I think, for three or four years. At one time, one method of getting the names that was adopted was to get the signatures on papers distributed on the benches. I think the system of one of the clerks standing at the entrance and noting the names as members enter the Hall would be very convenient."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" He would have to be there the whole day."

Rao Bahadur C. V. S. NARASIMHA RAJU :—" The thing is this. Some of the members in even the district boards and taluk boards deeply resent it when they are asked to sign in a register. It may be for the convenience of the Audit Department. If really it is the requirements of the Audit Department, I think they must make their own arrangements to have the names of the members that attended the meetings noted by their own staff. But to ask the members to sign in the register every day is, I think, and some people feel, derogatory to their position, and they may even refuse to sign."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" They will not get batta if they refuse to sign." (Laughter.)

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" I wish to put my own point of view before the House. My suggestion is not merely for the convenience of the Audit Department. I think that as persons whose names I hope will go down to history along with the proceedings of the Council, it is very essential that we should leave behind us some record testifying which members partook in the deliberations on any particular day. We have no means at present of ascertaining this unless in matters in which the House goes into division. Formerly the proceedings of the Legislative Council used to open with a list of presons present. The same thing, or whatever other arrangement we may make for ascertaining the attendance of members, would be useful for that purpose. But I think that to take down the attendance of members at a fixed hour every day would interfere unduly with the liberty and convenience of members because they come and attend at all times. If hon. Members are not able to suggest any method, I shall have to ask Government to incur the necessary expense. But I do not think that there is anything derogatory about signing a book. I do not know about the members of local boards and municipalities, and this is not a question of signing the attendance at a particular hour as is

the case in certain institutions. What is wanted is merely this, that members should at any time they please during the day go up to the threshold and put down their names. I have no objection to considering any other arrangement."

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"It is true that in the local boards the practice of taking signatures obtains, but I should like to know from you, Sir, the practice in the Mother of Parliaments, whether it is usual in the House of Commons to obtain the signatures of members present."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"They have a means of recording attendance there."

Rao Bahadur A. S. KRISHNA RAO PANTULU :—"May I suggest that unless you find very strong reasons to deviate from the practice which has been in existence, it may not be departed from; and as regards these registers, I would request you to consider the advisability of not insisting upon it."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I do not insist upon it."

Rao Bahadur A. S. KRISHNA RAO PANTULU :—"Because apart from the question pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, I think it is intended merely as a sort of historical record of the proceedings and to ascertain who have been attending the Council. That is a different thing altogether. But if, in the matter of introducing the attendance register, there are any reasons behind it. . . ."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Absolutely nothing of the kind."

Rao Bahadur A. S. KRISHNA RAO PANTULU :—"Or whether it is to ensure that the members drawing travelling allowance have given correct dates, that is, whether it is a question of audit and all these things. . . ."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"There is no such thing. I am sure everybody is willing to take on trust the declarations of members that they have attended on particular days. That is not the point. Nor do I see what Government would save by insisting upon an attendance register for that purpose. But as a matter of record it is very necessary."

* The hon. Mr R. A. GRAHAM :—"Perhaps it will reasure the House, Sir, if I say that the Finance Department is not behind this proposal and knows nothing about it."

Sriman SASIBHUSHAN RATH Mahasayo :—"If we know the method followed in the Mother of Parliaments, why not we follow it here if it is feasible?"

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"In the first place I may say this. In the House of Commons Members enter only by a particular passage and there is always a person stationed there for other purposes, and it is for him to keep a record. We cannot do this in our tropical climate. We have to keep all the doors open."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR :—"Does that functionary keep a record, Sir?"

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"He not only keeps a record of the Members present but also of all the visitors who pass through the galleries. The record I suggest is not for purposes of the travelling allowance bills, although even from this point of view the record might prove in a way

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which could not be resented by hon. Members. There are hon. Members who have not claimed travelling allowance perhaps for months and even for more than a year, and we have had considerable difficulty with the Audit department as regards such late claims. If we have information that they have attended, we can remind them as to their bills."

The hon. Mr. C. P Ramaswami Ayyar :—" There are two or three pending cases of claims which are more than one year old."

Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—" I should like with your permission to put a blunt question. In case we do not attend the Council, we would be disentitled to the batta for the day, but I want to know—I do not speak of me personally —if I am in Madras and do not attend Council for a particular day, if I would be disentitled to claim batta."

* The hon. the President :—" If the hon. Member is in Madras and does not attend the Council on a particular day, I do not know whether he would be entitled or not. It is an audit matter altogether."

* Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiyar :—" I was told—but such question has not arisen in my own case—that in the case of mufassal members who come here and do not attend here every day but attend only on some days they are entitled to claim batta. The allowance is a halting allowance."

* The hon. the President :—" I believe this is the case if hon. Members for some reason or another do not sit throughout the whole of the session but attend on a day or two. I believe they are allowed travelling allowance and batta for the whole period. Nobody has questioned the accuracy of bills sent in by hon. Members on the ground of non-attendance and we are not going to make use of this information for that purpose. (Laughter.) I may assure hon. Members on that point, because it would be contrary to the rules to disallow a member's halting allowance merely because he did not attend on a particular day on which he was in Madras. It is only for days after the Council is over that the halting allowance is not paid."

Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai :—" I think there is nothing derogatory in these hon. Gentlemen signing in the book. As you said, Sir, it would be a historical record to have the signatures, because afterwards if we pass away (Laughter) it will be a record of attendance. So, your order may stand and we may proceed with the business."

* The hon. the President :—" I am very reluctant to pass such an order. If it was passed, it could be disobeyed, as I would have no means of enforcing it."

IV

COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL

The Secretary then laid on the table a copy of the [a] statement showing the resolutions of the House Committee and the action taken thereon.

11-30 a.m.

V

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS FOR 1924-25.

Grant III.

* The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" Sir, I beg to move :

'*That the Government be granted an additional sum of Rs.* 65,000 ***under*** *Excise department—Transferred*'

[a] Printed as Appendix I on pages 519-521 infra.